

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 211645Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3678

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0134

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, AG, MO, MR

SUBJECT: SAHARA: SOVIET BASE, MILITARY SITUATION, ALGERIAN ATTITUDE

1. SOVIET BASING AT MERS EL-KEBIR DENIED: PRESS JAN. 21 OBLIQUELY
RIDICULED FRENCH NEWS REPORT THAT GOA WOULD OFFER UP MERS
EL-KEBIR BASE FOR USE BY SOVIETS TO COUNTER FRENCH TILT TOWARDS
MOROCCANS IN SAHARA DISPUTE. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT HERE CHECKED
STORY WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND WAS GIVEN CATEGORICAL
DENIAL. ACCORDING TO CORRESPONDENT, MINISTRY
TERMED REPORT OBVIOUS MOROCCAN PLOY WHOSE AIM WAS
FURTHER DETERIORATION IN ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS.

2. MILITARY SITUATION:

A. MAURITANIAN DEFEAT CLAIMED: CITING AFP,
ALGERIAN MEDIA JAN. 20-21 CLAIM THAT POLISARIO
INFLECTED MAJOR DEFEAT ON MAURITANIAN ARMY JAN. 19 AT
AIN BEN TILY, ON SAHARAAN-MAURITANIAN FRONTIER JUST
INSIDE MAURITANIAN TERRITORY IN NORTHERN SAHARA.
STORY CLAIMS THAT IMPORTANT MUARITANIAN OFFICER, CAPTAIN
SOUEDATE OULD OEDAD, WAS KILLED IN ENGAGEMENT AND
THAT SIX OTHER MAURITANIANS WERE WOUNDED. OULD OUEDAD,
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ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, HAD BEEN COMMANDER OF MAURITANIAN

PARACHUTISTS (1962-1971), THEN INSPECTOR OF NATIONAL GUARD AND FINALLY PREFECT OF AIN BEN TILY.

B. SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES RESUMED?: IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JAN 21, MOROCCAN CHARGE CLAIMED TO HAVE REASONABLY GOOD INFORMATION THAT SOVIET DELIVERIES OF ARMS HAVE RESUMED VIA MER EL-KEBIR. CHARGE AWARE OF REPORTS THAT DELIVERIES HAD CEASED BUT BELIEVED THEY HAD STARTED UP ONCE MORE.

3. ALGERIAN ATTITUDE:

A. MEDIA MILITANT: ALGERIAN MEDIA ATTACKS ON MOROCCANS PERHAPS EVEN MORE BITTER THAN IN RECENT PAST. LONG SERIES OF ARTICLES ENTITLED "THE KIND'S MORASS" HAVE CHARGED MOROCCAN OCCUPATION FORCES WITH WIDE RANGE OF UNCIVILIZED ACTS AND MEDIA JAN. 20-21 CLAIM MOROCCAN AVIATION NOW USING NAPALM ON REFUGEE CAMPS. ALSO, CARTOON SERIES PARODYING LIFE OF KING HASSAN HAS BEGUN APPEARING IN FLN DAILY EL MOUDJAHID. CARTOONS, ENTITLED "DRUG-THRONE FOR HRIRA II," DEPICT KING AS CORRUPT, MURDEROUS, POT SMOKING TYRANT.

B. POSSIBLE MILITARY RELAXATION: IN JAN 21 CONVERSATION MOROCCAN CHARGE CLAIMED TO DETECT RELAXATION IN ALGERIAN MILITARY POSTURE. WHEREAS ALGERIAN HAD EARLIER WISHED TO GIVE IMPRESSION THEY CONTEMPLATING WAR, THEY NOW, CHARGE BELIEVES, TAKING MORE PEACEFUL LINE. CHARGE CLAIMS THAT ARMY OFFICERS NOW BEING GIVEN PERMISSION TO GO ON LEAVE FROM FRONTIER AREAS AND THAT OFFICERS ON DUTY HERE IN ALGIERS CAN MOVE ABOUT MUCH MORE FREELY THAN BEFORE. AS IN PAST, CHARGE CONTENTS MOROCCAN FORCES STAYING OUT OF BORDER AREA.

4. MOROCCAN DEPORTATIONS CEASE: MOROCCAN CHARGE REPORTS THAT DEPORTATIONS FROM ALGERIA OF MOROCCAN SUBJECTS HAS CEASED. CHARGE PLACES NUMBER OF DEPORTEES AT 30,000-35,000 AND CLAIMS THAT INTERNATIONAL MEDIA OUTCRY AGAINST DEPORTATIONS FORCED ALGERIA TO CALL OFF CAMPAIGN. CHARGE SAYS THAT SOME MOROCCANS HAVE INDEED BEEN OFFERED, AND HAVE ACCEPTED, ALGERIAN NATIONALITY

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THOUGH FIGURE LESS THAN 5,000 MENTIONED IN PRESS HERE. NEW ALGERIAN TACTIC VIS-A-VIS MOROCCANS HERE IS TO FORCE THEM, UNDER THREAT OF IMPRISONMENT, TO SIGN DECLARATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO AND SAHARA SELF-DETERMINATION.

5. COMMENT: REPORTED MERS EL-KEBIR DEAL WITH SOVIETS WOULD VIOLATE LONG-STANDING ALGERIAN POLICY, BUT WE CANNOT EXCLUDE PROPOSITION ENTIRELY.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: CAN DEPARTMENT OR INFO ADDRESSEES
COMMENT ON ALGERIAN CHARGE THAT MOROCCAN AIR FORCE
USING NAPALM IN SAHARA?PARKER

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